

Suicide Prevention & Recovery In the Face of COVID-19

Safety Planning and Lethal Means Safety

Moderator:

Tammy Hopman Suicide Prevention Coordinator

Presenters:

Suzanne McGarity Rocky Mountain MIRECC

Emmy Betz University of Colorado School of Medicine

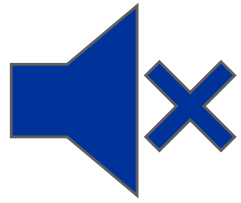
Matt Wetenkamp Gun Shop Project Coordinator, Office of Suicide Prevention,
CO Department of Public Health & Environment

Chat Support:

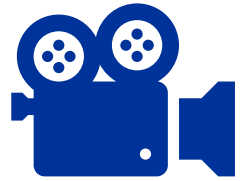
Tomas Yancy Suicide Prevention Case Manager



Housekeeping Issues



Please mute your microphones- they will be automatically muted to limit possible distractions.



This event will be recorded and LIVE streamed on social media.



As a reminder for this public event, please make this a safe and respectful learning environment for all participants!



Q&A for participants: Please use the chat for any questions. Chat will be moderated, and questions will be presented to the panel.



Support/Resources: Suicide Prevention Case Managers will be available via chat during each session to provide resources and support as needed.



Take care of yourself. Mental health recovery and suicide can be challenging topics to discuss. Take regular breaks throughout the day and reach out for support if needed.

Free, Confidential Support 24/7/365



1-800-273-8255 **PRESS 1**

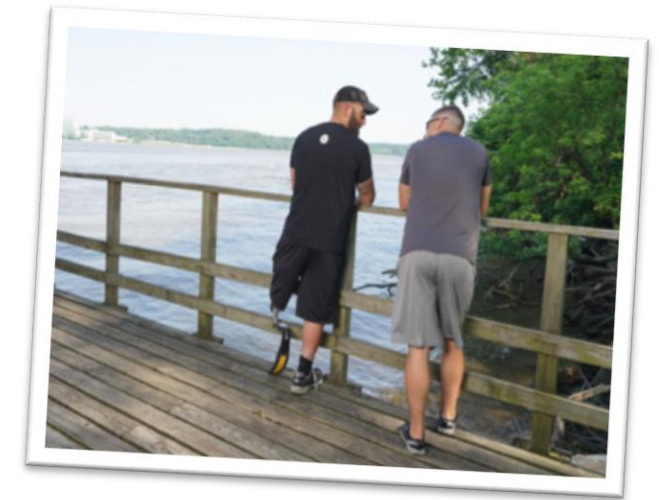
• • • • Confidential chat at **VeteransCrisisLine.net** or text to **838255** • • • •

- Veterans
- Service members
- Family members
- Friends

Safety Planning and Lethal Means Safety

A Sense of Purpose, Belonging and Social Connection contribute to a sense of Happiness and overall wellbeing.

- **COVID 19 impacts:**
 - Job loss / financial stressors
 - Perceived loss of purpose or burdensomeness
 - Loss social connection / Loneliness
 - Limited access to coping mechanism like going to gym or park
 - Redesigned health care offerings, (face to face to televideo)
 - Loss of health / Illness
 - Loss of loved one or fear of anticipated loss
 - Increased environmental ripples, violence, death, anxiety, unseen threats
- These circumstances may led to increased thoughts of suicide or suicidal crisis.
- What we know is that suicide thoughts come and go and the crisis will pass over time. The goal is get through the crisis without taking action for self-harm or suicide.
- Today we would like to share the importance of safety planning and lethal means safety in suicide risk management.
- Dr. McGarity will start us off by talking about the importance of safety planning.



Dr. Suzanne McGarity
Rocky Mountain MIRECC

Safety Planning During COVID 19



COVID, Firearms and Suicide

- Dr. McGarity shared safety planning is an important step is making the environment safe and buying time between the peak of a suicide crisis and access to lethal means. While some suicidal crises last a long time, most last minutes to hours.
- In addition to consideration of firearms related to suicide lethal means management. There is another form of safety, physical safety that may also be of concern to the community in relation to firearm access.
- Dr. Betz will you share what we are seeing related to firearm purchases, violence and suicide in this last year, particularly with onset of COVID concerns.

Dr. Emmy Betz
University Colorado School of Medicine

COVID, Firearms and Suicide



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Limiting access to lethal means during crisis can buy valuable time, to slow things down and allow suicide crisis to pass.



Suicide Risk Fluctuates over time



Safety Interventions can buy time

Risk

Time

Risk may decrease as the individual has time to reduce emotion, weigh alternatives, and pull in supports

Matt as Dr. Betz shared there has been an 85% increased firearm purchases in the last few months. We have identified the need for safe storage of firearms and reduced ready access during a suicide crisis as an important risk mitigation measure. Can you tell us more about Colorado efforts for promoting suicide prevention strategies aimed at reaching the firearm community and Colorado Veterans....

Matt Wetenkamp

Gun Shop Project Coordinator
Office of Suicide Prevention
CO Department of Public Health & Environment

Lethal Means Safety Through Collaboration, Shared Messaging, & Training

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Colorado Gun Shop Project

- Education and awareness project targeting gun shops, firing ranges, and firearm safety course instructors
- Core message is that limiting a suicidal individual's access to firearms is a critical aspect of firearm safety
- Educational materials include posters, brochures, fact sheets, and Colorado Crisis System wallet cards
- Relationship-building between local organizations has emerged as one of the unexpected benefits of the initiative



Colorado Firearm Safety Coalition

- OSP is an active partner
- Includes local retailers, ranges, safety instructors, and prevention professionals
- Led to highly supportive and invaluable partnerships with local ranges and retailers that continue to enrich the process and brainstorm additional avenues for outreach
- Created an interactive map of locations in Colorado that can provide temporary safe storage during periods of crisis



Provider Education on Means Safety

- Supporting providers with clinical skills to deliver lethal means safety counseling to patients is an OSP priority
- Following a successful pilot, a Colorado-created training module and protocols expanded into a 3-year study with positive results
- Not veteran-specific, but the results show that the training works
- OSP has made the free training available statewide to all interested agencies and providers.
- To access, visit www.train.org/colorado and search for course 1076412 “Lethal Means Counseling: A Role for Colorado Emergency Departments to Reduce Youth Suicide.”



Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and Their Families

- Formed in 2018, with representation across state departments, veteran-serving organizations, and provider agencies
- Lethal Means Safety was identified as one of four key priority areas
- The Veterans Crisis Line added to all CO Gun Shop Project Materials
- Creation of a publicly available firearms safety video and one pager
- Training for community members and organizations supporting the veteran community, including SAVE, QPR, Mental Health First Aid, and LivingWorks Start



Q & A

In Summary

Safety Planning and Lethal Means Safety

- Even the most serious thoughts about suicide are usually brief and temporary.
- Nonetheless, access to lethal means during these high-risk periods may result in death by suicide.
- Reducing access to lethal means is one of the few population level interventions that has been shown to decrease suicide rates.
- Building in time and space between the impulse to act and the means to harm one's self saves lives because: About **90 percent** of people who survive a suicide attempt do not go on to die by suicide.
- If we can collaborate with Veterans ahead of time to develop a safety plan and plan for safe storage of firearms or other lethal means, we can help them survive a suicidal crisis.

Please Standby as we get ready for our next session

Postvention: Loss, Bereavement and Support

